

'As we mark the 40th anniversary of Medicare and the negotiations for the new National Health Reform Agreements commence, it is time for all governments in Australia to reflect on the principles on which Medicare was founded: equity, efficiency, simplicity and universality,' says AHHA Chief Executive Kylie Woolcock.

'These founding principles were close to heart for the co-architects of Medicare, Professor John Deeble and Doctor Dick Scotton, who were determined to provide Australians with a dependable and equitable healthcare system.'

'AHHA has been fortunate enough to have worked closely with Professor John Deeble, who was a life member of AHHA and the namesake of our Deeble Institute for Health Policy Research. Professor Deeble was a steadfast defender of universal health care for nearly 50 years, having been troubled seeing people refused health treatment because they could not afford it.'

'With this in mind, it's unfortunate that we still see our most vulnerable Australians experiencing poorer health outcomes, often as a consequence of not being able to access healthcare services in a timely manner. This undermines Medicare's original principles of universality and equity,' says Ms Woolcock.

'Increasing costs of technology, rising out-of-pocket costs, long waiting lists, and bulk-billing rates declining also means that the principle of efficiency is being undermined.'

'The complexity and siloed nature of the health system is becoming routinely recognised amongst experts and the public and is no longer stated with alarm but a simple fact, hence the principle of simplicity is being undermined.'

'Universal health care, through Medicare, is a much-loved feature of our Australian way of life. This anniversary is not just about reflecting on how Medicare can be reformed to achieve better health for Australians, it's about reflecting on how we can reinforce the kind of health care that Australians want, and honouring the legacy and principles on which Medicare was founded.'

'Now is the time to revisit the original foundational principles of Medicare.'

The online version of this [media release](#) can be found on the AHHA website.

**The Australian Healthcare and Hospitals Association (AHHA) is the independent peak membership body and advocate for the Australian healthcare system and a national voice for universally accessible, high-quality healthcare in Australia.**

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